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ABSTRACT

Intended for writing teachers, the activities in this issue blend right/left brain lessons--kinesthetic, spatial, and playful--to provide students with prewriting experience. The activities include the following: (1) creativity olympics, such as finding criteria by which large groups of students may subdivide themselves into successively smaller groups, and story line relays in which each player adds three words at a time to a story; (2) finding words or developing opinions on a continuum from one extreme to another; (3) "about me" projects; and (4) Tom Sawyer projects. (HTH)

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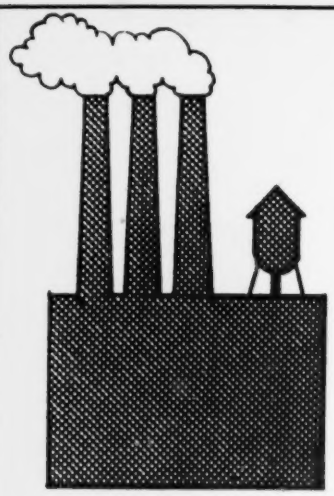

The Idea Factory

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for junior high & middle school

Summer 1984

FRAMEWORKS

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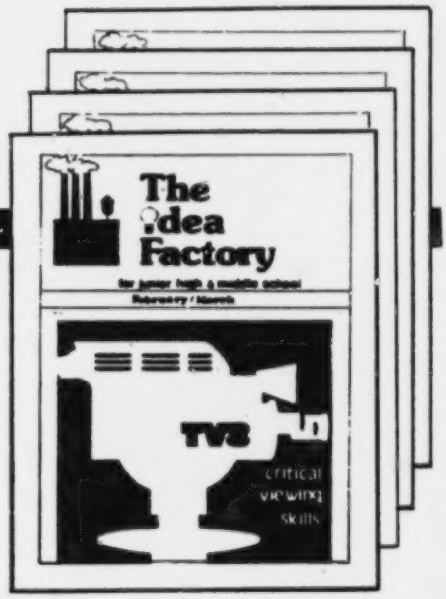
SOMEPLACE SPECIAL

JHM

JUNIOR HIGH/MIDDLE SCHOOL ASSEMBLY

The Idea Factory

For Junior High and Middle School



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1983-84 Membership USA	$7.00
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From the Authors

Why "Frameworks"? We were trying to show big frames with lots of possibilities for many lessons. We were trying for right/left brain lesson blends: kinesthetic, spatial, and playful frames which provide pre-writing experience.

In addition, we have a commitment to the Glasser idea that people work harder in an environment blending humor, caring, and sharing.

It is our belief that teachers only want the end of the thread--they want to unravel their own creativity; they need the knowledge that someone (sometwo) somewhere (Seattle, Washington) is unraveling, too.

- Mary Ann Olson

MaryAnn

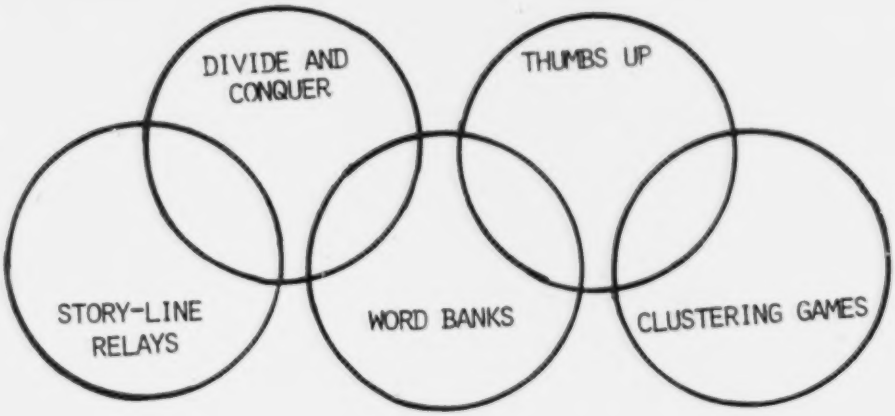
- Teddi Baer

Teddi

The Framework Picture playfully inserts students into a classical art masterpiece. They begin the writing process by being there physically, visually rather than verbally. Our "masterpiece" is a facial gymnastic encounter. The elaboration can extend to recreating a human diarama of The Queen of Sheba by Francesca. The extension to the verbal could follow. Extract characters from a famous art work and add quips.

Ideas for art easily reproduced can be found in "Masterpieces," a coloring book in black and white by Mary Martin, Running Press, Philadelphia, 1981. Examples of quips are found in "Quirks of Art," Charlton Cards Limited, Toronto, Canada.

CREATIVITY OLYMPICS



These intellectual Olympic Games help kids practice developing their creative thinking skills in these four basic areas:

--fluency: generating a quick quantity of possibilities
--flexibility: making up many different categories of ideas on one topic
--originality: making up unique or unusual possibilities
--elaboration: adding details or expanding the basic idea.

(For more about these four thinking skills, see May, 1983, Idea Factory, p. 16.)

Each event of the games is designed to engage mental strength in at least one of these four aspects of creative thinking.

Scoring: Each student has an index card on which to record points. Both individual and team points can be earned in each event. Directions precede each activity. Awards can be made after each round; or given at a culminating award/reward activity. "Winner's Circle" is one idea for such an event. You and your students may devise many others.

EVENT #1: DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Object: Students divide themselves from large groups into smaller and smaller groups by finding criteria that can subdivide them. Examples of criteria: blue eyes/not blue eyes; Nikes/not Nikes; have a brother/don't have a brother. Allow as many rounds as you like.

A more difficult variation is to have students always divided into equal groups.

Groups develop their own criteria for each division; no repetition of criteria is allowed.

Do one Warm-up Event for practice before counting points.

Winning team is the one that gets its subdividing down to all individuals first. Score each individual on the winning team 10 points each; each member of the other team will earn 8 points each.

EVENT #2: BUTCHER PAPER WORD BANKS

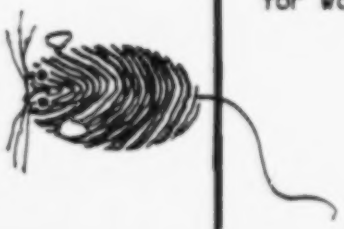
Object: Students create word banks on topics of their choice.

Materials needed: Two large pieces of butcher paper along one wall of the room; a Magic Marker for each student in the competition.

Using the two teams that competed in Event #1, issue instructions that each team is to have a 2 minute caucus to determine a topic for the Word Bank Competition (examples: sports, food, music).

For four minutes, team members add words to team's word bank, with everyone working simultaneously.

Scoring:
--One point per word
--Then cross out words that are duplicated
--Add one point for each remaining one-of-a-kind word
--Students on side with most total points add 10 points each; students on other side get 8 points each.



EVENT #3: THUMBS UP!

Object: Students create objects out of their own thumbprints.

Materials needed: Two long sheets of butcher paper mounted on the wall, two inked stamps, and a watch or timer.

Round #1: Object is to have everyone on each team make a thumbprint somewhere on his team's sheet. Then, within 4 minutes, make as many different picture objects out of these thumbprints as possible. Score one point for every different thumbprint picture and one point for each artist who elaborated on a thumbprint.

Round #2: Everyone makes a thumbprint on the team paper. In the remaining 4 minutes, all the prints must be decorated so that all are unified in some way, such as spectators at a sports event, zoo animals, vegetables at a Farmers' Market, or participants at an air show. Score one point for every related thumbprint picture.

Round #3: Based on the topic of Round #2, each group generates a word/phrase/sentence cache to describe the topic. The object is both to use words in quantity and to use words that are complex. Score will be 1 point for each separate word, and extra points for words with these letters count:

Letters	Points
2-5	2
5-6	4
7	8
8 or more	10

EVENT #4: STORY-LINE RELAYS

Object: Student teams write a story, each player adding 3 words at a time. Time limit is 5 minutes.

Materials Needed: Felt tip marker "baton" and roll of adding machine tape for each team.

Divide students into teams of 5-6, each with a Magic Marker "baton," and a roll of adding machine tape.

Set timer for five minutes.

When first team member is done writing three words, the player passes the "baton" to the next player.

Scoring:
--1 point for every word
--5 points for every sentence
--(-1) for each "and"

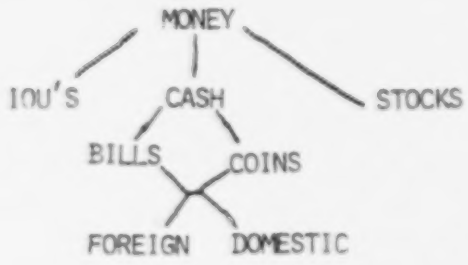
(5)

EVENT #5: CLUSTERING GAME

Object: In groups of 5-6, students are to take one central idea and draw spokes from that idea to a second level of clusters, and possibly to a third and fourth row of clusters based on offshoots of the original idea.

Materials Needed: Large pieces of butcher paper mounted on the wall.

Example:



Time limits vary for each round:
- 5 minutes for Round #1
- 4 minutes for Round #2
- 3 minutes for Round #3

Scoring:
- 1 for each circle
- 5 for each 2nd level circle
- 10 for each 3rd level circle
- 15 for each 4th level circle

WINNERS' CIRCLE: VICTORY CHANT AND CELEBRATION

The Olympic contestants then determine which of the four creative thinking skills were their areas of greatest strength: fluency, flexibility, originality, elaboration. (A review of the skills used in each game would be a good preparation for this activity.)

Students work in one of four groups based on their own assessment of area of greatest strength; for instance, <u>fluency</u>. Goal is for each of the four groups to write a 12-line poem of triumph and to brag about the strength of their group!

Teacher gives each group the first line or asks students to create their own opening line.

Flexibility or
Fluency or
Originality or
<u>Elaboration</u> is the best!

Then the group adds the rest of the lines of their victory poem to perform for the other groups.

Example:

Flexibility--it's the best
Of all the skills in our Olympic quest,
So when it comes to taking the test,
We've out-"categorized" all the rest!

USING THE HUMAN CONTINUUM "FRAMEWORK" FOR GENERATING WRITING

Specific activity with possible elaborations:

In teams, students replace 25 words that might be used in their writing instead of "said" between "yell" and "whisper." Circle their three best. Write their best on 3 pieces of large paper. Send one from the group to place self appropriately on the continuum between "yell" and "whisper." Members from other teams do the same; placing themselves on line where the group deems appropriate (Groups need to communicate with the standing member).

When each team is represented by one member, the remaining members choose another circled word, write it and send another member to the line to the proper place between those already there. (Sitting members may help and prompt.) Choose another word, and another member goes to the line until the space is used up.

ELABORATION: Before you start moving "words," ask two students to be directors; they are to leave the room. Students place themselves in continuum. When they are satisfied, they mix themselves up. Directors come in and rearrange students-words as they see fit, giving reasons for their moves.

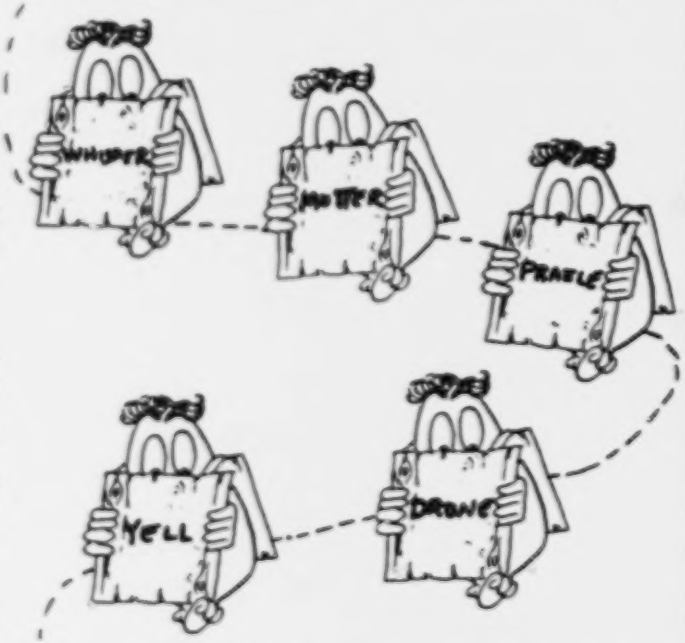
1. Discuss differences in position and reasons.
2. Act out words.
3. Demonstrate words.
4. The students not in the yell-whisper continuum generate adverbs. List 25, put on large paper. One of the sitting members takes an adverb and finds a verb partner, changes partners, acts out phrases, discusses differences.

POINT OUT TO STUDENTS: These words and phrases may be used in student writing. P.S.: Don't throw these butcher paper words away--use them for bulletin boards.

CHART OF WORDS

Other Ideas for Word Cache Continuums

Crawl----------Sprint
Classy----------Tacky
Sip----------Devour
Appetizer----------Dessert
Hut----------Castle
Mean----------Funny



OPINION CONTINUUM

Ideas for "Put Yourself on the Line."

I'm closer to:

Michael Jackson--------Rich Springfield
Lucy----------Miss Piggy
Reagan----------Mondale
Legalize marijuana----------Retain present laws
Letter grades on report cards----------Report cards without grades
Basketball----------Track
Nature----------Art

(1)

HUMAN TIMELINES AND HUMAN CONTINUUMS

HELP KIDS: MOVE
MAKE DECISIONS
DEVELOP VOCABULARY
THINK IN INCREMENTS
DEVELOP PRECISION

DO THIS WHEN...YOU NEED TO DEVELOP SKILLS OF

THINKING
CREATING
OR ORGANIZING
ORDERING
COOPERATING

AND REVIEWING - arrange in:

*alphabetical order or
*chronological order or
*opinion order or
*geographical order
*"Where do they stand on the line?"

AND CLOSURE - "Put Yourself on the Line"
"Where Do You Stand on the Issue?"

Human Timelines and Human Continuums are learning activities which can be used as a framework for various disciplines and lessons. The rules are: (1) Establish a floor space--long and narrow; (2) Either students themselves create a continuum, or (3) Students bring signs to line and arrange themselves in appropriate order.

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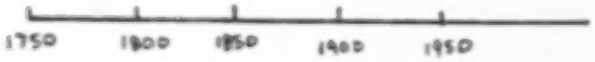
ALPHABETIZING SPELLING/ VOCABULARY BIBLIOGRAPHY

Students line up in alphabetical order according to last names, first names, middle names (Elaboration: race against time or against another group); spelling words, titles of books, research materials; write titles on butcher paper--have students stand as they would order materials in a bibliography.

****

HISTORY TIMELINE

Mark on the floor with tape; use measured increments after determining scale (i.e., 10 feet = 100 years). Let groups of students think of events they have studied; write each of these events on butcher paper; students carry events to proper place on the human timeline.



ART HISTORY

Give each student a print of a work of art; the students then arrange themselves in correct chronological order. The students use each other for help.

****

LITERATURE

Assign each student to be a character from Scarlet Letter; line up characters on continuum from accepting to didactic.

Allow each to be a short story the class has read; line up from realistic to fantastic; or compare main characters as strong-weak.

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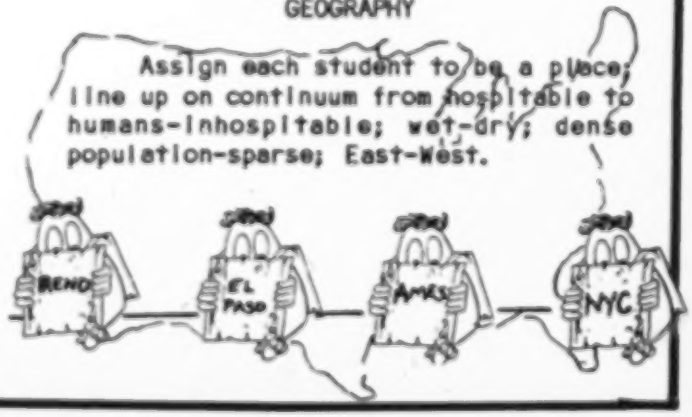
GEOGRAPHY

Assign each student to be a place; line up on continuum from hospitable to humans-inhospitable; wet-dry; dense population-sparse; East-West.



ABOUT ME

AVERAGE PERSON

...Ask students questions, like:

--How many inches tall are you?
--How many brothers and sisters?
--What color eyes?
--Your favorite food?
--Hope to be?
--Month of birth?

...Have students suggest more categories to average.

...Tally, using averages, means, or medians.

...Construct a life-sized silhouette on butcher paper (using a person of the average height) and label your findings.

...Compare with outcomes in other classes.

...Follow-up:
--Write a poem introducing "our average student" to other classes or parents for Open House
--List ways other classes are the same/different
--Reveal "How I'm unique"

3 QUESTIONS ON A BILLBOARD

...Put a long piece of butcher paper along one wall.

...As students work on other projects "about me," have them write 3 questions they wish people would ask them, and sign their initials.

...Next step would be to publish the list and use as a springboard for:

--class interviews
--auto-essays/poems
--categorizing.

AUTOGRAPHS GAME

...Divide a paper into 16 spaces

...Put a statement in each space, such as:

--I have a pet dog
--I went to California this summer
--I have a dime with me.

...Have students circulate to get autographs of classmates who fulfill the specifications in each space.

...Rules
--No one can sign twice on one sheet.
--You can't sign you own sheet.
--Teachers can be included.

...Follow-up: Design a set of 16 new questions to play this game again.

ABOUT ME

FACETS OF ME

STUDENTS COLLECT PICTURES AND WORDS SHOWING THEIR FACETS....
THE OUTER PERSON
THE INNER PERSON

ABOUT ME HELPS KIDS...

KNOW EACH OTHER (AND THEMSELVES)

APPRECIATE EACH OTHER (AND THEMSELVES)

THINK ABOUT EACH OTHER (AND THEMSELVES)

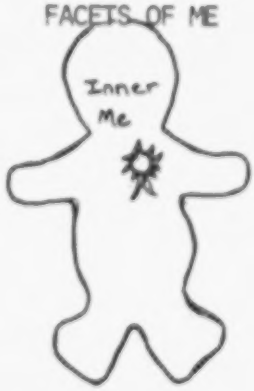
CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER (AND THEMSELVES

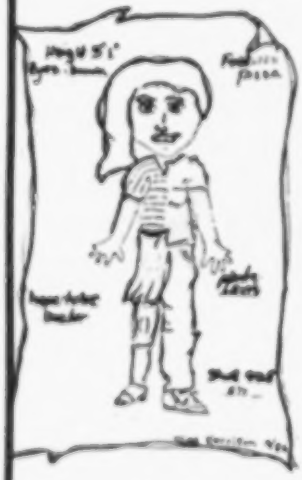
AVERAGE PERSON

WORK IN PAIRS.
INTERVIEW PARTNER ABOUT RECENT SUCCESS.
DESIGN IN WORDS AND/OR SYMBOLS A SUCCESS BUTON FOR YOUR PARTNER TO WEAR.

SUCCESS BINGO

FACETS OF ME





3 ?'S ON A BILLBOARD

AUTOGRAPH GAME

Student Art - Todd Harrigan

These activities can be used for setting a classroom tone, introducing students and teachers to each other, understanding each other's worlds.

They may also be used as ignition activities for:

AUTOBIOGRAPHIES
INTRODUCTIONS
INTERVIEWS
BIO-POEMS
BIO-ESSAYS
BULLETIN BOARDS

(10)

SUCCESS CARD BINGO

...Distribute index cards to each student. Have students write about one success they've once had that they think no one else might remember. (Examples: "I won a spelldown in 4th grade;" "I got a lead part in the church play;" "I won a sack race at the school picnic when I was 6.")

...Collect cards and redistribute. (No one should keep own card.)

...Students search for writer of card by asking probing questions. (No direct questions, like, "Did you write this card?" are allowed.)

...Each student collects information and gives information to fill out the whole story of the successful event.

...Students introduce each other orally, giving the story of their partner's success.

...Next day: Students prepare bingo boards by writing in each square the name of a classmate. (They may make as many different boards as they wish.)

...Pass out colored paper squares.

...Teacher again reads the information on the success cards. If students can remember whose card is read, they can cover the name of that classmate on the bingo board.

...Play for five names covered in any direction and go eventually for "blackout."

(Idea adapted from a Glasser workshop.)

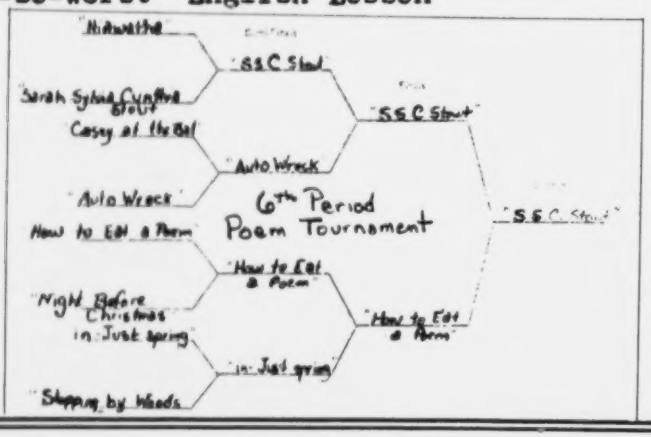
Tournaments

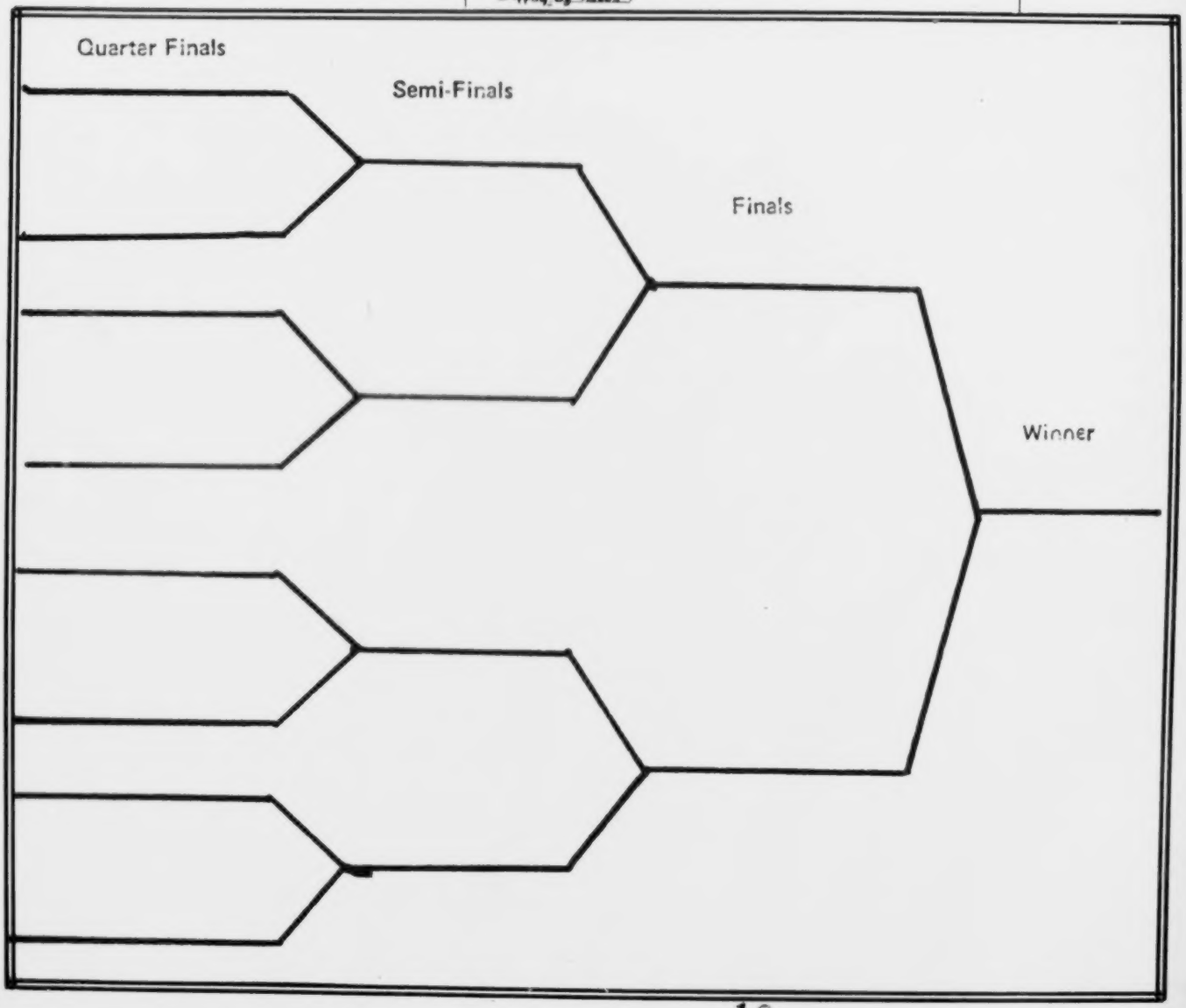
When do you do this?

- ✱Thinking: How will you defend the value of...?
- ✱Review: What do you remember?
  Example: Period 6 Poem Tournament
- ✱Closure: What did you like best?
  Example: "Not-So-Worst" English Lesson

OTHER TOPICS

8 Paintings
8 Objects I'd Save
8 Greatest Americans
8 People I'd Like to Meet





TOM SAWYER TODAY

Many modern books written for adolescents deal with issues they may face, such as divorce and drugs. In contrast, Tom Sawyer is delightful and refreshing in its focus on childhood, Tom's honest questioning of the adult world, and his imagination, creativity, and impressive adventures. The book encourages youthful responses to a sense that innocence still has its place.

Last year all my sixth grade students read Tom Sawyer. We began by focusing on a bulletin board of dialect taken from the book. Several students noted with great enthusiasm that their grandparents spoke just like that today! They were pleased with this real life connection to a book written over a hundred years ago.

We worked to complete about two chapters each day, including reviewing vocabulary, reading the chapters, and answering questions that both the students and I posed. In the early chapters, attention focused on Tom, his relationship with Aunt Polly, and how he tried to "get around" her. The students were fascinated by "the law of human action" Tom discovered when he had to whitewash the fence; in order to make a person covet a thing, it is only necessary to make it difficult to attain. They spent time sharing similar experiences in their own lives.

Religion, as it was practiced in Tom's hometown of St. Petersburg, led the students to many thoughtful reactions about the hypocrisy they observe in the world around them. Mentioned often was that they are made to do things that their elders neither value nor do.

Several students were fascinated by the character of Sid, seemingly Aunt Polly's favorite child, and they became furious with him at times for his awful ways. Others were quite envious of Huck and longed for his freedoms. Indeed, as the novel concluded, they were concerned whether he could tolerate a life of frontier civilization with the Widow Douglas. We all laughed together when Tom, expecting tears from Becky's eyes to drop down from her window on him, instead got water dumped on his head by the maid; we found many such instances of contrasting expectations and outcomes in the novel.

The novel opened up the students to respond honestly and warmheartedly in our class discussions. They related to the characters, felt their joy and sorrow, and watched them grapple with difficult choices. The students wondered aloud what they themselves would have done had they been lost in a cave, or witness to a murder, or had an opportunity to raft away to an island.

Teaching Tom Sawyer to sixth graders has been a very positive experience. The novel elicits honest reactions and our conversations about it have done much to keep open communication between my students and me. It is timeless and encourages avenues of discussion I previously had not explored. Furthermore, it allows children to be childlike and focus on childish issues, humor, and pranks. My sixth graders and I enjoyed the chance to be young with Tom, Becky, and Huck.

- Randy Ann Ehrenberg
Ithaca, New York

TOM SAWYER PROJECTS

- Ask students to list their most prized possessions, to compare their lists to Tom's (insects, a brass doorknob, marbles, and rattlesnake rattles), and to think about which items on their lists they would be willing to trade away. In my students' list, a childlike quality pervaded; several students stressed that friends were among their most prized possessions. Tom Sawyer obviously encourages youth to be proud of their friends.

- Encourage students to interview several generations of people in their families and community to create "superstition surveys." These surveys might address questions like: Are children more superstitious than older people? Where do superstitions come from? The resulting charts and analyses can be posted on room bulletin boards or be a basis for further writing.

- Have the students write adventures for a modern day Tom. This will enable them to see which of Tom's characteristics stood out most dramatically in their minds. My students had Tom right the wrongs they see in their own environments. Others stressed Tom's courage, sense of justice, and humor. For example, one student had Tom react to a teacher's making him write "I will not talk back" one hundred times, by having Tom's home computer complete the task for him!

- Several of these project ideas were adapted from Vicki, Itz Kowitz in "Teaching Guide to The Adventures of Tom Sawyer" (Scholastic Magazines, Inc. 1979). Many other interesting activities are also included. A special thanks also goes to Lynn Sapone, Student teacher at DeWill Middle School, for her help in developing this unit.

- RAH